



USDA FOREST SERVICE – 2004 AGENCY UPDATE



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Boise
National
Forest

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File Code: 5100

Date: June 8, 2004

Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Governor of Idaho
Statehouse, Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720

Dear Governor Kempthorne:

I am writing on behalf of the National Forest Supervisors in Idaho to provide you an update on our work to reduce the threat of wildfires to local communities. I am pleased to report our work has accelerated across the National Forests in Idaho in 2004, and the number already surpasses totals from last year. More than 40,000 acres of National Forest System lands have been thinned or burned since the beginning of fiscal year (FY) 2004 (October 1, 2003). The work completed for the first 7 months already surpasses the 23,000 acres achieved in FY 2003. The following table displays the information for each National Forest.

**Acres of Fuel Reduction on National Forests in Idaho
FY 2003 and FY 2004 (to date)**

National Forest	FY 2003 (October 1, 2002, to September 30, 2003)			FY 2004 to date (October 1, 2003, to April 30, 2004)		
	Mechanical Treatment	Prescribed Fire	Total	Mechanical Treatment	Prescribed Fire	Total
Boise	852	1,332	2,184	416	7,011	7,427
Caribou-Targhee	2,107	1,238	3,345	120	1,525	1,645
Clearwater	1,042	3,083	3,083	490	4,357	4,847
Idaho Panhandle	4,175	2,200	6,375	664	5,202	5,866
Nez Perce	95	1,841	1,936	0	11,916	11,916
Payette	200	400	600	0	4,615	4,615
Salmon-Challis	0	3,375	3,375	0	3,928	3,928
Sawtooth	365	1,851	2,216	710	2,395	3,105
TOTAL	8,836	15,320	23,114	2,400	40,949	43,349

Please notice the number of acres of mechanical treatment to date for 2004 currently lags behind the total for 2003. We expect this to change in the coming months because most of our mechanical fuels treatment projects are scheduled for implementation this summer. For example, on the Boise National Forest, we plan to complete 970 acres of mechanical fuels treatment, which will exceed our accomplishment for 2003 by more than 100 acres.

The work in Idaho's forests is accomplished by a variety of methods. In some cases, small trees and brush are burned where they stand through one or more prescribed burns. In other cases, trees are thinned and piled, chipped, or sold if marketable timber is present. Favorable weather conditions this spring allowed us to accomplish much on the ground. We also expect some prescribed burning may occur in September or October on days that allow safe burning.



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Our efforts are part of the National Fire Plan that emphasizes, in part, the reduction of wildland fuels from forests. As you are aware, removing built-up fuel that feeds fires is a top priority for the Forest Service and other land management agencies in Idaho. In addition to the work occurring on the eight Idaho National Forests, hazardous fuel reduction occurs on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Idaho Department of Lands, as well as on private lands.

We appreciate the efforts of the Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group, a statewide interagency group that prioritizes and coordinates work to reduce community risks from wildfire. We also recognize the partnership between the Forest Service and the Idaho Department of Lands, and the \$11 million in state and federal funds managed by the Idaho Department of Lands. These resources assist local governments with hazardous fuel reduction projects and provide public fire prevention and education.

Since the inception of the National Fire Plan in 2001, more than 3,300 acres of hazardous fuels treatment has occurred on non-federal lands in Idaho. Counties, local emergency planning committees, resource conservation and development associations, fire districts, homeowners' associations, and homeowners have completed these community defensible space projects.

I believe the best way to sum it up is to echo what Lemhi County Commissioner Robert Cope said in our recent news release: "Protection from wildfire is vital to nearly every community in Idaho. As the counties move forward with their mitigation plans, all residents and landowners--public and private--will reap the benefits."

Please contact any Idaho Forest Supervisor or me if we can answer any questions or provide more information.

Sincerely,

/s/ Richard A. Smith
RICHARD A. SMITH
Forest Supervisor

cc:
Idaho Forest Supervisors
Regional Foresters, R-1 and 4

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Acres of Fuel Reduction on National Forests in Idaho
FY 2003 and FY 2004 (to date)

National Forest	FY 2003 (Oct. 1, 2002-Sept. 30, 2003)			FY 2004 to date (Oct. 1, 2003 – Sept. 17, 2004)		
	Mechanical Treatment	Prescribed Fire	Total	Mechanical Treatment	Prescribed Fire	Total
Boise	852	1,332	2,184	1,824	7,666	9,490
Caribou-Targhee	2,107	1,238	3,345	1,553	1,847	3,400
Clearwater	1,042	3,083	3,083	1,607	5,357	6,383
Idaho Panhandle	4,175	2,200	6,375	3,179	5,757	8,936
Nez Perce	95	1,841	1,936	2,635	12,158	14,793
Payette	200	400	600	1,878	4,669	6,547
Salmon-Challis	0	3,375	3,375	0	5,047	5,047
Sawtooth	365	1,851	2,216	987	2,395	3,382
TOTAL	8,836	15,320	23,114	13,663	44,896	57,978

September 21, 2004
Update

